

CORDELL BANK & GULF OF THE FARALLONES NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARIES
SANCTUARY ADVISORY COUNCIL
Working Groups

WORKING GROUP STRUCTURE

Working Group Selection Process

The working groups operate under the purview of the Sanctuary Advisory Council (SAC). Working group members are individuals with a strong knowledge of the regional marine resources and management issues, who also have the ability to understand and respect diverse points of view. Individual SAC members nominated themselves to participate in the working groups. Sanctuary staff members with specific knowledge, or who can provide logistical support, will also sit on the working groups. Additionally, both staff and SAC members have nominated experts from the community to participate in the working groups.

Alternates

Due to the short duration of the working groups, there will be no alternates for working group members. All working group members have the responsibility to attend working group meetings. In the case that a member is not available for a particular meeting, a working group member may send a representative to observe the meeting.

NOAA's Role

Sanctuary staff will provide logistical support to the working group including contacting technical advisors, arranging conference calls, supplying background information and tracking down additional information as needed. A Sanctuary staff person will also play the facilitator/leader role (see below). Additionally, the Sanctuary will participate in the working group as a stakeholder. As a stakeholder, the Sanctuary representative will forward NOAA's point of view, provide advice on NOAA's authority and define the range of acceptable outcomes for NOAA.

Technical Advisors

The working group may choose to invite other individuals with special knowledge and expertise related to the priority issue to attend meetings to provide information and/or advice. Advisors will be encouraged to participate in discussions but shall not participate in the decision-making of the working groups.

Constituent Involvement

Working group members serve as conduits for two-way information exchange with their constituencies. Constituents wanting to provide input to the process are encouraged to channel their concerns and suggestions through individual members of the working group who they feel could represent their interests. Working group members will make a concerted outreach effort to communicate regularly with their agencies or constituencies to keep them informed about the process and the issues under discussion.

Participation and Observation by Members of the Public

All working group meetings are open to the public and observers are welcome. Meetings of the working group are meant to be working meetings focused on collaboratively developing a recommendation to the Sanctuary Advisory Council regarding their specific issue. As such, the working group meetings are not designed to be opportunities for soliciting input from the general public. However, members of the public are encouraged

to raise their concerns with working group members before or after the meetings, as well as during breaks, to help ensure that all issues of significant concern to the public are considered in the working group's deliberations or directed to the Sanctuary Advisory Council.

Additions to the Working Group

During the course of its deliberations, the working group may determine that it's in the best interest of achieving a quality and informed outcome to add additional members with different perspectives to the working group. Such new members may be added by consensus of the working group.

Replacement of Working Group Members

In the unlikely event that a member of the working group is not able to serve, given the short duration of the working groups, no replacement will be found.

MEETING MECHANICS

The working group will initially meet approximately once a month. Actual meeting dates will be determined by the working group at the first meeting. The time and location of all working group meetings will be publicized in advance and the public is invited to attend. The development of meeting schedules will take into consideration the special needs of its members so as to maximize attendance. Members agree to place a high priority on participation in the working group process and to make a good faith best effort to attend all meetings.

Any member of a working group may request a break or caucus to consult with other colleagues or constituents attending the meeting. The facilitator may also request or suggest a caucus.

Draft meeting agendas along with support materials will be provided to the working group at least 10 calendar days and preferably two weeks in advance of the meeting. The facilitator will produce meeting notes following each meeting that identify major issues discussed or any actions to be taken*. The draft meeting notes will be distributed as part of the subsequent meeting agenda packet for review by the participants. Finalized meeting summaries will be posted on the Sanctuary's website.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

The following points are offered as examples of the roles and responsibilities of members of the working group:

- actively participate in discussions
- bring concerns to other members, co-chairs or facilitators
- share the airtime with others
- have respect for different points of view and be attentive when others speak
- ask questions of each other for clarification and mutual understanding
- verify assumptions when necessary
- avoid characterizing the motives of others
- acknowledge and try to understand other's perspectives
- deal with differences as problems to be solved, not battles to be won
- stay focused on the task at hand
- refrain from distracting others through side conversations

- silence all cell phones during meetings
- keep the facilitator neutral
- concentrate on the content of the discussions and allow the facilitator to focus on how to promote productive discussion
- share the responsibility of ensuring the success of the process and the quality of the outcome
- make a best good faith effort to work towards reaching an agreement
- keep the working group informed regarding constraints on your decision making authority in behalf of your agency or constituency
- Keep your agency or constituency informed about the perspectives, concerns and interests of the working group

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FACILITATOR

The facilitator is a neutral third party whose responsibility is to serve the entire working group impartially, build consensus and provide the procedural framework for productive working relationships among participants. The facilitator serves at the pleasure of the working group and can be replaced at anytime. Other roles and responsibilities of the facilitator include:

- help the focus on their common task, clarify information and achieve a common understanding of the available information
- create a constructive environment for open discussion and dialogue
- protect individuals and their ideas from attack
- ensure all points of view are expressed and understood
- ensure that all members have an opportunity to participate in discussions
- clarify areas of agreement and disagreement
- help the group reach agreement, resolve differences, identify options, and discover common ground
- ensure that key decisions are understood by all working group members and documented

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LEADER

this person serves as the "team captain" in meetings. Often, team leaders organize and coordinate a meeting's goals and objectives. The leader is often a "content expert". The leader is typically the one who plans the meeting, sets the direction and establishes accountability.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE RECORDER

The recorder documents the process, decisions, actions taken (or to be taken), and the outcomes of a meeting. The recorder is responsible for keeping the "meeting notes". The recorder will present the meeting notes to the facilitator at the end of each meeting. The facilitator will review the notes with the working group at the start of the next working group meeting.

* Meeting notes are intended to characterize and clarify points of agreement and areas in need of resolution in order to move the process forward. They are not intended to serve as "meeting minutes" in the traditional sense.